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SECURITY COUNCIL
Fiftieth year

Letter dated 21 July 1995 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 20 July 1995 from His Excellency Mr. Vladislav Jovanovic, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, addressed to you (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under item 114 (c) of the preliminary list and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Bratislav DJORDJEVIC
Minister Plenipotentiary
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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ANNEX

Letter dated 20 July 1995 from His Excellency Mr. Vladislav Jovanovic, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, addressed to the Secretary-General

I am writing to draw your attention to the events in the region of Gorski Kotar, part of the Republic of Croatia, with the majority Serbian population in eight local communities (175 villages) living outside the United Nations protected areas (UNPAs).

Over the past three years, the Serbs in Gorski Kotar have been exposed to the threat of forcible mobilization and are in fact being forcibly mobilized, to which the international community continues to turn a blind eye.

These acts of the Croatian authorities constitute a blatant violation of the oral agreement reached between the Serbs and the Croatian authorities in August 1991 on the maintenance of the status quo in the area of Gorski Kotar pending a general political solution. These acts are also contrary to the agreement signed by the representatives of the Serb and Croatian authorities on 6 July 1992, which, inter alia, envisages that the Croatian authorities will not mobilize the Serbs from this region into the Croatian military.

The first threats of the Croatian authorities to mobilize all Serbs aged between 16 and 60, may I recall, date back to January 1992.

On his visit to the municipality of Dreznica on 26 May 1992, Croatian Interior Minister Josip Boljkovac requested a list of all Serbs aged between 16 and 60 eligible for military service. Mobilization of Serbs was subsequently suspended after they complained to the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR).

The mobilization in the villages of Brestovac and Vitunja of 8 June 1992 and in all other Serbian villages of 20 June 1992 was also suspended after the complaint of Serbs to representatives of UNPROFOR and the European Community Monitoring Mission (ECMM).

But already on 29 August 1992, five Serbs from Dreznica were forcibly mobilized. On 1 November 1992, 20 young men, 16 years old, from Jasenak, Srpske Moravice, Gomirje and Dreznica were summoned for military duty, while a number of Serbs were also mobilized on 28 December 1992.

All Serbs eligible for military service in all eight Serbian communities refused the summons for military duty they were sent on 9 February and 12 March 1993 and the mobilization was called off after an urgent intercession by Serb representatives with UNPROFOR and ECMM. However, the Croatian authorities did forcibly mobilize those Serbs who had found shelter in Gorski Kotar as refugees.

In 1994, the Croatian authorities continued the forcible mobilization of Serbs by abducting them from their homes and places of work and by checking their identity in streets and on public roads. On 13 August 1994, for instance, all Serbs eligible for military service from Gomirje, Srpske Moravice, Jasenak, Dreznica and Ponikve were forcibly mobilized and sent to the firing line to fight their fellow Serbs from the Republic of Serbian Krajina. The mobilization led to a mass exodus and the absconding of Serbs in the woods and mountains of Gorski Kotar.

Since 6 May 1995, the Serbs from the areas of Srpske Moravice, Gomirje, Jasenak, Dreznica, Gornje and Donje Dubrave are being forcibly mobilized all over again. They are being taken to serve in the units of the Croatian Defence Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina or the units of the Croatian regular forces in the territory of former Bosnia and Herzegovina. So far, all Serbs eligible for military service from Brestovac and Vitunja have been mobilized; 10 Serbs from Musulinski Potok; 15 Serbs from Gomirje and Srpske Moravice and 5 Serbs from Dreznica, Jasenak, Gornje and Donje Dubrave. The mobilization is being carried out at night by breaking into people's homes and with the brutal use of force.

These instances provide abundant evidence that the Croatian authorities are carrying out a continued and forcible mobilization of Serbs in this region, and that they have stepped up these actions recently despite existing agreements.

I wish to recall that the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia informed the United Nations of these problems on two occasions, as well as the generally very difficult situation of 6,000 Serbs living in Gorski Kotar in the immediate vicinity of the war zone. They are exposed to enormous pressure and the Croatian authorities continue to violate their basic human and national rights.

Therefore, the Yugoslav Government views the acts of forcible mobilization in the context of the continued efforts of the Croatian authorities to compel the Serbian population to leave their ancestral homes and to ethnically cleanse this region, as was the case with western Slavonia (UNPA Sector West). For that purpose, Croatia has deployed 20,000 troops towards the Serbian villages in Gorski Kotar with 35 tanks and 20 armoured personnel carriers, while Tomislav Mercep men, notorious for their mass crimes against the Serbs in western Slavonia, are quartered at Dreznica and Jasenak.

At this difficult juncture for the Serbian people in Gorski Kotar, I call on you to do everything within your capacities to stop the forcible mobilization of Serbs. Your actions, I am confident, will help preserve peace in Gorski Kotar and facilitate the overall peace efforts of the international community.

(Signed) Vladislav JOVANOVIC